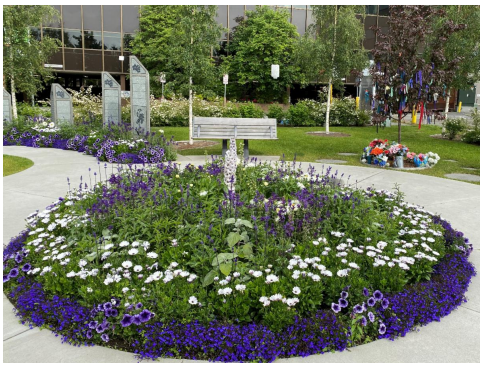
Assisting Alaskans Affected By Violent Crime Since 1985



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Covid-related Court Delays: Q&A with the DA

As COVID-19 cases increase in Alaska, courts have again suspended jury trials through the end of August. In Anchorage, they're on hold until at least August 27. A list of locations and dates of suspension is here.

Given the backlog in court cases since the pandemic began, Victims for Justice checked in with Anchorage District Attorney Brittany Dunlop about the impact on victims of violent crime. Read the interview here.

Interview: APD Cpt. & VFJ Board Member Sean Case

Sean Case is a longtime Anchorage police officer who also is a commissioner with the Alaska Criminal Justice Commission. Case grew up in Anchorage and has a vested interest in promoting a safe and healthy community. He's a strong advocate for victims' rights and serves as a board member for Victims for Justice. Case recently sat down for a wide-ranging interview about criminal justice in Alaska, the state's exorbitantly high rates of domestic violence, the role of victim advocates, and more.

Read it here.

Victim Voices

"November 3, 2019 is a date that will always make me shudder. It was a date that drastically and forever changed me."

With this sentence, Tasia Giannulis' victim impact statement begins. A judge read it aloud in Anchorage Superior Court in April before sentencing a man to four years in prison after he pleaded guilty to felony assault charges.

Read Tasia's story here.

A Step in the Right Direction

Our board president Blaze Bell joined VFJ executive director Victoria Shanklin on August 11 at a news conference in Anchorage called by Gov. Mike Dunleavy.

The governor announced new initiatives to improve Alaska's justice system by adding a new tracking system for rape kits and implementing legally required DNA collection from suspects arrested for committing crimes against people.

Read more here.

New Annual Report

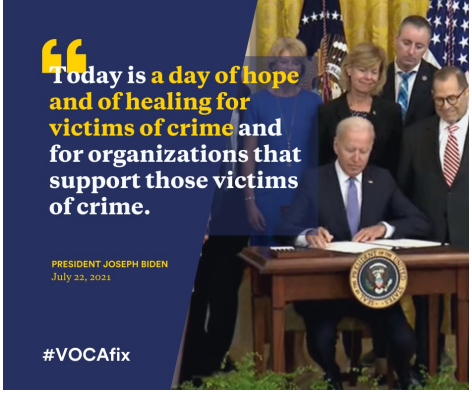
In our newly released 2021 annual report, VFJ notes a steep climb in the need for client services

The pandemic's continuation in 2021 coincided with an uptick in VFJ's caseload. Although it's unclear what caused the number of clients we typically serve to grow, we do know that our caseload expanded by at least 20% as did the demand for the services VJF offers. Read about VFJ's work last year in our new annual report.

Victims for Justice

VOCA Fix bill signed into law

VFJ appreciates the bipartisanship displayed in D.C. in July when the Senate passed H.R. 1652, the #VOCAFix bill. President Biden swiftly signed it into law. The bill strengthens the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) by re-directing new funding to support victim services nationwide through the Crime Victims Fund. The Crime Victims Fund holds offenders accountable and comes from fees and



penalties paid by those who commit federal crimes. These funds comprise a large portion of VFJ's budget. Thank you to Sen. Lisa Murkowski for holding a listening session and joining a bipartisan group of senators in March that introduced the bill in the Senate.

Help Wanted

Have great office skills, an easy-going, team-player personality, and a desire to help Victims for Justice to run smoothly and grow? We have a flexible, part-time opening for an **Executive Assistant**. Details here.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Out monthly homicide grief group, conducted by Zoom, is a chance to connect with others whose lives have been impacted by homicide. For more information, please contact mevans@victimsforjustice.org or call our office at 907-287-0977.

We're participating in the Target Circle program. You can vote for Victims for Justice and help direct Target's giving to benefit our organization. For full program details and restrictions, visit target.com/circle

Got a story idea for the newsletter? Email us at info@victimsforjustice.org

Contribute Today!

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